

Our intent is to facilitate and support the education of people behind bars. To achieve this end, our primary work is to provide free reading material to prisoners upon request. In doing so, we hope to shift focus from one of detention and retribution to one of restoration, community and compassion. We welcome your involvement and thank you for your support!

Since our inception in 1999 we have maintained regular mailings of books to prisoners in 49 states across the country (with Texas and California being the most common destinations). Today we fill hundreds of requests each month. We have helped to establish a law library in the Baltimore City women's detention center, and are currently working to create a permanent, accessible library in the D.C. Jail. We have created a prisoner literary magazine, hosted a variety of community education events, and we want to do more!

*...for some of us you keep our minds free, therefore only our bodies are imprisoned. For others your books educate us. For others of us your books teach us skills for possible careers so we are not part of the prison systems revolving door of return. And yet, still for others of us your books give us hope.*  
-J.H. Jamestown State Prison, CA.

## We need your help

### Here's how you can get involved!

#### Donate your resources:

- Money for postage is our greatest need. \$50 will get books into the hands of 25 prisoners!

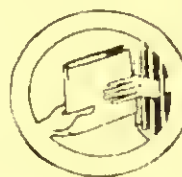
Send your tax-deductible donation to:

Equal Justice USA

PO Box 5206

Hyattsville, MD 20782

Write "Books to Prisons" in the memo line of your check



- Donate your books—we especially need dictionaries, Spanish/English dict., GED materials, African-American lit. and history, books about American Indians, and how-to books. Contact us if you have books to donate
- We are always in need of packing tape and dispensers, scissors, and address labels

#### Donate your time:

- We invite you to join us packing books on Wednesdays from 5-9pm at Foundry United Methodist Church at 16th and P St. NW, DC (2.5 blocks east of Dupont Circle)
- We also need your help if you — have experience with web design or grant writing, are able to deliver books to the post office, want to track letters and prisoner input, or can help meet special book requests

#### Contact Us:

301-699-0042

bookstoprison@mutualaid.org

Please contact us about wheelchair accessibility

MillionMonkeyMarch  
graffiti.net  
↓  
MATT

## D.C. Area Books to Prisons Project



*Helping prisoners escape since 1999*

## Prison Nation

In 1980 there were fewer than half a million people in U.S. jails and prisons. Since then, crime rates, especially for violent crimes, have dramatically fallen. **However, today more than 2.3 million people are incarcerated.** With 1 out of every 136 residents in prison or jail, the United States has the highest rate of incarceration of any nation in the world.



*I got some books today,  
it's like getting oxygen  
-G.M., from prison in  
Md.*

### Who's going to prison?

**M**ore than 70% of those in prison are in for non-violent offenses, mostly drug charges. While only 11% of monthly drug users are black, blacks represent 42% of those in federal prison for drug violations and 60% of those in state prison for drug felonies. What's more, the United States has a higher percentage of black men in prison than South Africa under Apartheid! On any given day more than half of the young black males living in Washington, DC and Baltimore are under supervision by the criminal justice system. But while the overwhelming majority of prisoners are men, **poor women of color are the fastest growing prison population.**

## A Prison Education

Since 1995, nationwide, states have decreased their funds for college construction by \$954 million while funds for prison construction have increased by \$926 million. As social services disappear, more than \$20,000 is spent for the average prisoner to spend one year locked-up.

**Incarceration is ineffective:** No academic research has shown a correlation between crime rates and number of people in prison. And despite skyrocketing incarceration, recidivism rates are still 60% or higher.

**Education is effective:** Research does show that the more education a prisoner receives, the less likely s/he will return to prison. However, **education programs have been consistently cut from prisons.**

To boot, The Rand Corporation concluded that only a million more dollars spent on education and drug treatment would reduce crime 15 times the amount that stiffening sentencing would. However, prisoners that want to further their education have little to no support. In this suffocating environment -

**Help us give individuals the tools to continue their education!!!**

Statistics from the Prison Policy Initiative and the US Bureau of Justice Statistics

## What works

**P**risons are built on our exaggerated fears, and thrive on the idea that complicated social problems can be shackled, chained, isolated, and dehumanized away.

Security doesn't have to be written with steel bars; we have the power to define security as freedom to give and receive quality health care, jobs, and education.

Every step we take to build our communities based on healing and reconciliation is a step away from living in a Prison Nation. **Every book we squeeze through the bars is a testament to our potential as a society!**

**F**or more information on prison and movements for change, you will find great resources, links, and information at: [www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org)

At exactly which point do you start to realize, that life without knowledge is death in disguise - Talib Kweli